

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION



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May 8, 2012

Mark Lere
Future Fisheries Improvement Program
MFWP 1620 E 6th Ave.
P.O. Box 207001
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

Dear Mr. Lere:

I would like to express my support for the Beaverhead Conservation District's Swamp Creek siphon project in the Big Hole watershed. I have spent the last 13 years working with landowners in the Big Hole Watershed on issues specific to water availability, irrigation, and land management. In addition to providing the landowner with a much more efficient water delivery system, this project will have significant benefits for Arctic grayling and builds upon partnerships that have initiated a tremendous community effort for Arctic grayling conservation in the Big Hole watershed.

Swamp Creek is a productive tributary for Arctic grayling and has some of the highest numbers of juvenile grayling in the Big Hole Watershed. However, currently access to Swamp Creek is limited by an irrigation canal that intercepts Swamp Creek and acts as a fish passage barrier. This project will install a siphon that will transport canal flow under Swamp Creek and allow access for Arctic grayling and other native and sportfish species to 12 miles of habitat upstream of the canal. The project will also benefit instream flows, reduce entrainment and maintain and improve irrigation infrastructure and efficiency that is critical to local ranch operations. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is pleased to support this project and is committed to providing technical expertise including pre- and post-siphon flow monitoring during the life of the project.

Please consider this extremely important project for funding. The mutual benefits of improving irrigation infrastructure for the landowner and instream habitat for the Arctic grayling dovetail nicely with ongoing grayling restoration such as the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurance (CCAA) that is currently in the implementation phase in the upper Big Hole. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Roberts".

Mike Roberts
Hydrologist
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

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